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TRUE RELIGION SPIRITUAL, CATHOLIC AND PRACTICAL.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE ORDINATION

OF

REV. MARTIN DUDLEY,

TO THE PASTORAL CHARGE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN EASTON;

DEC. 31, 1851.

BY E. EDWIN HALL,
PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN GUILFORD.

NEW HAVEN:
A. H. MALTBY, No. 67 CHAPEL STREET.
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TO THE REV. E. E. HALL:

DEAR SIR,—

Having been solicited by numbers of the Church and Society in this place, to request for publication the Sermon delivered at the ordination of Rev. MARTIN DUDLEY, we cordially unite in the wish thus expressed, and respectfully solicit a copy for this purpose.

WM. BANKS,
NATHAN DAVIS, } *Committee of Society.*
E. S. WINTON,

Easton, Feb. 21, 1852.

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SERMON.

1st Corinthians, i, 17.—"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

Paul preached the Gospel for nearly two years in the city of Corinth, to a people celebrated far and near for their wickedness, their wealth, and their worldly wisdom. The learning of some of these Corinthians consisted, for the most part, in what they called philosophy,—which however was happily characterized by the Apostle, as philosophy falsely so called. It was not that sort of knowledge which may be an important auxiliary in the illustration and enforcement of moral truth, but it was eminently unpractical in its character, tending directly to scepticism—to the total subversion of all rational faith. The learned men of Corinth were so accustomed to look after truth or wisdom, only in the subtleties of a vain and speculative philosophy, that they rejected with disdain the simple doctrines of the Cross, stigmatizing the preaching of the same as foolishness. This sort of learning, whose legitimate results were self-conceit and infidelity, presented in some respects a more serious obstacle to the progress of the Gospel, than the idolatry and ignorance which prevailed among the people generally.

Another difficulty lying in the way of the Apostle's success in that city, was found in certain men who were "Jews by nature,"—who were so wedded to the formalities of Judaism, that the spiritual religion of the Gospel was to them a stumbling-block. These formalists believed religion to consist in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, rather than in good hearts and godly lives. They seemed to think that some prescribed order of worship was absolutely necessary to sincere homage. They thought more of the gold on the altar, than the sacrifice to be offered there; more of the ceremony with which the offering was made,

than of the sincerity and purity of heart in which the gift was brought. When the Apostle preached Christ and Him crucified to these religious formalists, they opposed themselves and blasphemed—they vilified the name of Jesus, and treated his Gospel with contempt.

In view of these apparently insuperable obstacles to the progress of the Gospel, the Apostle was about to leave the city, and go to the Gentiles. But God spake to him in the night by a vision, bidding him not to hold his peace, but to preach the truth with a brave heart—assuring him of protection, and encouraging him with the declaration, that He had much people in the city. Paul was obedient to this heavenly vision; and through his preaching, the truth found its way to many hearts, and a large and flourishing church was the result of his labors. The Gospel triumphed gloriously in spite of the formalism of the Jew, and the scepticism of the Greek; in spite of the ignorance and idolatry, the luxury and licentiousness of the people, which made Corinth one of the most famous of ancient cities.

Now if Paul had adapted his preaching to the peculiarites of some one of the many sects which existed in the city, doubtless he might have gathered more followers in less time, and with little or no opposition—at least such opposition as he actually encountered. He might have yielded to the prejudices of the Jews, and easily transformed the worshippers of the synagogue into Judaizing Christians; making religion to consist essentially in a burdensome, ceremonial order. Just as, at a later period in the history of Christianity, Pagan temples, once consecrated to Jupiter and all the gods, were piously re-consecrated to the blessed virgin, and all the saints; and by retaining their images, their offerings, their altars, their incense, their lighted tapers, the Pagans of Rome soon became the "Christian idolaters of the mystic Babylon."

Paul might also have seen different results of his labor in Corinth, if he had adopted some one of the schemes of speculative philosophy which prevailed among men of rank and learning. He could easily have suited his doctrines to their prejudices and precepts, preaching with wisdom of words, winning their attention and applause with the graces of Grecian eloquence. But the Apostle was there for no such sectarian purpose. He was there to speak truth which had no harmony with existing systems—no fellowship with the darkness of mere speculative philosophies. He stood up to teach

and defend a *simple, spiritual, practical religion,* against a stiff and intolerant formalism—against a learned, and showy, and imperial heathenism. Thus the Apostle was sent, not so much to administer ordinances; not to give his attention to the mere forms and order of a visible chuch; but rather to preach the Gospel, not as a mere speculative system of doctrines and precepts, but as a spiritual and practical religion, lest the great doctrine of salvation through the Cross of Christ, should be deprived of its power and efficacy, as a truth revealed of God. In this glorious truth is the hope of life to a world dead in trespasses and sins. To proclaim this truth plainly, to give it prominence above all things else, was the business of the Apostle, and hence he said to the Corinthians, "I determined not to know any thing among you (i. e. not to preach any thing to you) save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." This then, is to be the chief business of Christ's ministers, in all places, and in all ages of the world.

Now there are certain peculiarities of the religion of the Gospel, fairly implied by the language of the text, which are to be made pre-eminent in preaching the Gospel—which are to be maintained as essential and necessary to the regeneration of men—to their complete redemption from the ignoble servitude of sin.

These peculiarities of true religion are,

SPIRITUALITY, CATHOLICITY, PRACTICALITY.

I. The religion of the Gospel is *spiritual;* a thing of spiritual life, rather than a thing of outward observances and ordinances.

All men in their natural state, are represented in the Scriptures as being dead in sin. They are living in a state of spiritual death—they are dead in respect of that divine life of the soul, which animates those who have ceased to be the servants of sin. Now it is the great design of the Gospel to impart a new and spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead—to lift them up from the dark grave of sin, to the light of life—to bring them forth before God in the spiritual beauty of a new creation. Hence it is the declared purpose of our Savior by his teachings, to give the knowledge of salvation to his people; to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; to guide their feet into the way of life. Hence our Lord says, "he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and

believeth in me, shall never die. If any man keep my sayings, he shall never see death." The religion of the Gospel then, this spiritual life, has its beginning in the soul of man, through the exercise of a true faith. By believing on Christ men have life through his name. He that hath the Son, hath life; he who acknowledges and receives Him, hath this spiritual life begun in his soul, and it progresses and is made strong by the virtues which a true faith produces in him. He then who truly receives and believes the Gospel, will begin to feel within him the stirrings of a new and spiritual life; and if he is a fathful keeper of the sayings of Jesus, the cherishing of his words will be the nourishment of that life, whereby it will wax stronger and stronger, till in the end he shall triumph over death and hell, and rising to his royal destinies, reign with Christ forever and ever.

Now it is not only the *design* of the Gospel to enkindle this religious life in men's hearts, but its *tendency*, when rightly preached, is in the same direction. The ministration of the word is the chief instrumentality whereby the Spirit will regenerate men, and cause the efficacy of the Cross of Christ to be testified unto the world. If this is not true, Paul would doubtless have written a different epistle to the Corinthians. If the religion which he wished to inculcate had been a thing chiefly of forms and ordinances, rather than of spiritual life, we should have heard him say, "Christ sent me not to preach the Gospel, but to baptize; not by some informal application of water, but only by immersion or pouring, or sprinkling and signing the forehead with the sign of the Cross, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect." If we are to understand the efficacy of the Cross in this way; if by baptism with water, "a child of wrath" may be really transformed into "a child of grace," and "an heir of eternal life," what need is there of preaching the Gospel? Why need the Apostle say "necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel," if spiritual regeneration may be secured by baptism? If men may be grafted into the body of Christ's holy church, by the ceremony of *baptism*, how could the Apostle say in truth of those whom he had not baptized, "I have begotten you in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel?" Men may indeed, in some sort, become members of a visible church, by the rite of baptism, but not of the only holy church of Christ, which is the church invisible, whose names are written only in heaven. For membership in that

church, the application of water is no suitable or lawful preparation; the true church of Christ was purchased by His blood, and no one therefore can enter it but by the blood of Jesus. Baptism with water, administered by human hands of whatever authority, can never purify the soul of the pollutions of sin, which must be done before a man can have any spiritual life, or be admitted into the spiritual kingdom of Christ. The soul must rather be purified by obeying the truth through the Spirit. Baptism was not *designed* to work this change; it has no such efficacy—no such tendency, any more than had that empty ceremony of Pilate, when he washed his hands to cleanse his heart from that guilty spot of innocent blood.

The ordinances of the Gospel—all mere forms connected with a visible church, are in themselves destitute of all life-giving energy. Men are regenerated, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *word of God*, which liveth and abideth forever. The spiritual life, which is the substance of religion in the soul, can not be imparted by any observances, or ceremonies, or sacraments. He that heareth my *word*, says Christ, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. The Gospel makes known no other means whereby religious life may be commenced in the heart. There are indeed those who say this life is communicated to men through the sacrament of the Lord's supper. They pervert the words of Jesus, when He says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." Though this language has no reference whatever to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, yet the formalists of the present day, like the Jewish formalists of old, are so eager after things sensible, that they discern not the spiritual intention of our Savior. And yet they are without excuse; for our Lord explains his meaning, when He says, "It is the *Spirit* that quickeneth, or giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing; the *words* that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." A man then may partake of that bread, and that cup, which are set forth as emblems, and emblems only, of the body and blood of Jesus; and yet, if he does not, in a higher and spiritual sense, partake of his words, and thus eat of that bread which cometh down from heaven, his soul will perish with hunger—if he does not drink of the fountain of the water of life, he will thirst forever.

When men pervert the design of sacraments, and make them necessary conditions of salvation, or necessary instrumentalities to the production of spiritual life, then we must say, as the Apostle said of some who thus regarded circumcision, Christ crucified will profit them nothing; they make the Cross of Christ of none effect. If the *significancy* of the sacraments is lost sight of, in the *manner* of their administration, they become emphatically mere "divers washings, and carnal ordinances." Spiritual or religious life comes of hearing, and truly believing the words of Jesus, not by baptism; that life is nourished by keeping his sayings, not by feeding on his "glorified body," even though it be broken to us by "duly authorized hands." It may be truly said of all observances and ceremonies—all forms which men of many minds may think needful to the existence of a visible church, that they have no life-giving efficacy. It may be said also, that strictly speaking, they are no part of religion. There are, however, certain forms of godliness, which are the natural manifestations of religious life. They are the peculiar investiture of the principle of vital godliness, and they appear in a greater or less degree of moral beauty and perfection, according to the energy or power of the divine life in the soul. These forms of spiritual life are faith, hope and love, or more particularly, humility, penitence, purity, peaceableness, gentleness, joy, goodness, and such like. They are the *forms* of religious life, because they are the natural production of the principle or substance of religion, implanted by the spirit of God in the souls of men. This principle of spiritual life, like the principle of life wherever found, originates and produces its own essential forms. It has its own natural laws, by which it works strongly and powerfully against all opposing forces, and unless utterly destroyed by some foreign power, it will in obedience to its own laws, struggle into those forms peculiar and proper to itself. If the "seed of God" be once implanted in the soul, it is quickened and invigorated by a spiritual influence from the great fountain of spiritual life, and according to fixed and natural laws of its own, it is developed into those essential forms already mentioned. Under the fostering care of the spiritual hand that planted it, it becomes a living branch of a living vine, luxuriant and fruitful. We find in this true religious life, and its essential forms, which forms are the graces of the spirit—a thing unchangeable and incorruptible. It is heaven, descended in its spirit,

its origin is in God, and wherever it works in human hearts, it produces in kind, the same forms of godly living; it makes men so like Christ in moral character, that they are called members of his body. It unites them to Him as the branch is united to the vine; each individual, being a partaker of the same principle of spiritual life, becomes a member of the church invisible, of which Christ is the living Head. It is a spiritual union, which can be consummated by no forms, or ceremonies; by no system of priesthoods and ordinances. This religion of the Gospel therefore is peculiarly a spiritual, living thing. It never dies; though it may have its winter, yet the spring will come to it again, and under the quickening influence of the beams of divine love, and the dew which falls perpetually from the Spirit's living wing, it will revive again, and flourish and spread its healing fruit, in spiritual blessings, through the world. Such is religion in its life, and in its essential forms. These graces of the Spirit are the forms which God has clothed it with; we find them described in the uncorrupted word of His truth; we look not for them in traditions, in the doubtful records of those unreal and shadowy men, whom some lovers of antiquity denominate "the fathers." God's word is our authority, as it came fresh and pure from the source of all light and truth. Without these forms of godliness in some degree of advancement, religion has no life at all; with them, we have all that is absolutely necessary to the manifestation of the true life of religion in each and every responsible individual.

II. Another peculiarity of the religion of the Gospel, implied in the text, is its Catholicity; i. e. it is not *sectarian* in its spirit. This indeed follows from what has already been said of the spiritual nature of true religion. One object of the Apostle in his epistle to the Corinthians, was to check the spirit of sectarianism which began to manifest itself in the church at Corinth. Some seemed to regard circumcision as a necessary ordinance, and therefore gave it the pre-eminence. Others thus considered baptism; and others fixed their minds wholly on the person who administered these ordinances; some supposing Paul, some Apollos, and some Peter as alone "duly authorized" to perform in these cases, in order to the "validity" of the ordinances. They were becoming sectarian therefore, by giving an undue prominence to certain ceremonies—by thinking more of ordinances and the manner of their administration, than of that religious life

which the preaching of Christ crucified was designed and fitted to produce in them. This is the spirit of all sectarianism. Its tendency always is to exalt the forms and ordinances of Christianity above the substance and the life; to think more of the ceremonies and outward order peculiar to some visible church, than the spirit and power peculiar to the church invisible. Sectarianism is really but another name for formalism. It falsely asserts a visible unity in the Church of Christ, whereas that unity is wholly spiritual, and is never spoken of in Scripture but in reference to the church invisible. It is no where asserted that the church in its outward order is one, or that it is not divided; but *Christ* is not divided; i. e., His *spiritual body*, the church invisible, is not divided. The Apostle expressly says that among Christians there are diversities of gifts, and different ministries, and diversities of operations, but one and the same Spirit. Whatever be the forms and order of a visible church, all true Christians are baptized into one body by one Spirit. It is because the spirit of religion is one, and the same in its vital principle; because it produces in all hearts the same essential forms of its life, that the church of Christ can ever be one, even in heaven. It is thus composed of lively stones, and is built up a spiritual house; how can it then be a visible church, a formal unity, or a mere unspiritual outward uniformity? It degrades the religion of the Gospel to confine it beneath the burden of carnal ordinances, to reduce it to a vile bondage of forms and ceremonies. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. The forms peculiar to the organization of a visible church, are no *part* of religion, but simply *assumed* or *borrowed* by religion; they are of no binding force, except so far as they are needful in advancing the spiritual religion of the cross. When they cease to secure this end, they ought to be abandoned, as worthless in themselves, and as dead encumbrances to the ever-free, ever-living spirit of true religion.

The religion of the Gospel supposes an individual responsibility in the matter of salvation. It makes the relation of man to his Maker personal and immediate. Sectarianism interposes the ordinances of the church, and seeks to convert men by ceremonies, and save them by outward appliances. It seeks the advancement of what it calls "the church," by the magic of sensuous influences; which lull the conscience, and deaden the spiritual sense, and blind the mind to the simplicity, the beauty, and the power of truth. Our Savior most

signally consecrated the principle of non-conformity to all mere sectarian systems, when He said, "The hour cometh, and now is, when neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, ye shall worship the Father; but all true worshippers shall worship Him in spirit and in truth." The same principle was inculcated by the Apostle, when he said, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." That yoke of bondage was Jewish ceremonies. Every sectarian system of priestly monopoly was set at nought, in that singular and sublime declaration respecting all true Christians,—"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ." With Christians as individuals, the first object should be, the cultivation and growth of their own religious life; and as a church, to convince the world of the nature and reality of holiness, and the absolute need of good hearts and godly lives. True Christians live chiefly for this end, rather than for the advancement of any particular outward order of the church. The more thoroughly men's hearts are imbued with the religion of the Gospel, the more earnestly will they strive to bring back the wayward sons of men from their sinful wanderings, to the custody of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Sectarianism says, "Lo! here is Christ," in this or that order of a visible church. But Christ himself says, "The kingdom of God is within you." It is an inward life, an inward power; and not a thing of outward doing, as sectarianism constantly affirms. There can be no sectarianism in heaven; there is therefore none in the religion of the Gospel.

III. Another peculiarity of the religion of the Gospel is its Practicality: i. e. it is experimental or practical, in opposition to a mere speculative religion.

The doctrines and precepts of the Gospel have all a practical bearing, and tend to persuade men to a life of piety toward God and man. The great design of God, in giving us a revelation, is to place before us on his own authority, the practical truths of a pure religion; that by being obedient unto the same, our hearts might become holy, and our lives blameless. There is no truth of the Gospel which the highest interests of man require him to know, which may not be known and understood, and to which he may not, and should not be conformed in heart and life. The truths of religion,

profound though they are, are simple in their form, and powerful in their simplicity. They carry with them their own recommendation; having in themselves such proofs of their genuineness, that they will be received by all unperverted minds. All men have the capacity of receiving and understanding the knowledge of salvation, or they could never experience the life-giving power of the great doctrines of the Cross. The religion of the Gospel is indeed God's wisdom; but it knocks for admission at the hearts of the poor and the ignorant, and lifts its voice not only in the schools of philosophy, but in the chief places of concourse, in the streets and in the market-places. It has somewhat in it suited to the present necessities of men in all the varied circumstances of life. It is full of warnings to the careless, and reproof to the wayward; of promises to the faithful, and consolations to the afflicted; of hope to the despairing, and life to the dead. Now if religion is made a mere speculative system, the wants of man's moral nature are without any remedy. If its doctrines are so presented that they appear to men like a mere anatomy of theology, in which nothing shall be discerned but metaphysical speculations, it is deprived of all efficacy, of all fitness to alarm the conscience, or move the heart, or give relief to those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. But when its doctrines are set forth in the practical form, in which the Gospel always presents them, they have the freshness and power of living truth; and under their influence men may breathe more spiritually, and live more closely after the example of Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life." The mystery of spiritual life, and the blessedness of it, here and hereafter, consists in the cheerful and faithful obedience of the known will of God. Thus while the religion of the Gospel is a *reasonable* thing, it is not a mere system of *rationalism.* It is not a vain, speculative system, though it is a Divine philosophy. For the philosophy against which the Apostle has warned us, was falsely so called. There is a true philosophy of religion, which the preacher of the Gospel can not too well understand, and into a knowledge of which he should endeavor to instruct his hearers. The Bible comes to us as reasonable, philosophical beings; the system of religion which it inculcates is in some sort a superstructure, whose basis is found in the common nature of mankind. It assumes the existence of certain philosophical principles, which are the common and universal

facts of human nature; without which the whole system would be a web of mystery to the world. The knowledge of this philosophy is in some degree necessary, in order to the practical illustration of the simplest truths of the Gospel. Errors in religion result, for the most part, from errors in philosophy. The changing character of theological systems and the differences which mark them, are not chargeable to the *truth* they possess, but to their philosophy, whose ground principles have no harmony with each other, or with the truth. Any philosophy which is inconsistent with the nature of the soul, will eventually prove the leaven of destruction to whatever system of religion is based upon it. But still, says an old divine, "the way to heaven that Christ has taught us, is plain and easy, if we have but honest hearts; we need not many criticisms, many school distinctions, to come to a right understanding of it. Surely Christ came not to ensnare us and entangle us with captious niceties, or to puzzle our heads with deep speculations, or lead us through hard and craggy notions into the kingdom of heaven. No man will ever be kept out of heaven for not comprehending what was beyond the reach of his understanding, if he had but an honest heart, that was ready to comply with Christ's commandments."

CONCLUSION.

It is the preaching of this Spiritual, Catholic, Practical religion of the Gospel, which by God's blessing is to free men from the bondage of error, and the slavery of vice; and show forth the efficacy of the Cross in all the kingdoms of the world. Though there are many hindrances to the progress of the Gospel; though a large majority of men the world over, are bound down to some system of formalism or heathenism, yet these obstacles will never subvert the purposes of mercy to men, which God has so distinctly declared in the life and death of Christ. We have therefore encouragement in the promise of our Lord, that our labor in his service shall not be in vain. "This Gospel shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations." He has said it, whose word shall never fail. He has said it, on whose shoulders rests the government of the universe. He has said it, of whose increase there shall be no end. He has said it, who is himself the chief corner-stone of that spiritual temple, which shall be built up of lively stones, elect and precious, gathered

from every nation under heaven, which in the day of its completion, shall fill the whole earth.

We have encouragement also from the past history of the progress of the Gospel. Though but little, apparently, was accomplished before Christ breathed His life out on the Cross, yet He was lifted up only to draw the nations unto him. A light went forth from that Cross to lighten the Gentiles, and scatter the darkness from the eyes of them that sat in the shadow of death. Jews and Gentiles of every name, confessed that Christ was Lord, to the glory of God the Father; thus early illustrating the efficacy of the Cross, wherever the Gospel was made known as spiritual and practical truth. Though God in His providence suffered the darkness of a long spiritual night to gather over the world, yet the truth of the Gospel, like hidden fire, did not lose its vitality or its power. It burst forth with renewed energy in the days of the Reformation, to shine again with unwonted splendor—to attract the nations more widely to its homage. We may assure our hearts still more of the fulfillment of Christ's promises in the ultimate triumph of the Cross, from what our own ears have heard and our own eyes have seen. Islands of the sea, which a few years ago were shrouded in the thick darkness of spiritual ignorance, have been illumined by the Gospel, and have felt the renovating efficacy of the Cross. Trees of righteousness have been planted in the sands of Africa, and those waste places are beginning to be turned into the gardens of the Lord. Streams of salvation are putting out the fires of funeral piles, which for ages have cast their baleful light on the waters of the Ganges. Some of almost every name may now read from the Word of truth, the wonderful works of God, in their own tongue. The word and the providence of God therefore, assure us that He will not abandon the work which He has begun, and so gloriously prospered. Shall not the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord? Shall any power, any combination of principalities and powers, ever turn Him from His great designs of mercy to our race? Never; till the light which still shines from the cross of Christ, shall break in gladness on all the nations. Never; till the spiritual, practical religion of the Gospel shall illustrate the efficacy of the cross to the world, and assert its supremacy over all systems of formalism and false philosophy.

ADDRESS TO THE PASTOR ELECT.

My Brother: You are to be introduced into a ministry here to-day, whose chief business it is to minister to the necessities of the soul. You are to persuade men that the interests of the soul are of higher importance than all others; that its destiny is the great problem of this life; that the most glorious or the most fearful things in the universe hang on the solution of that problem. You are to persuade men of the infinite importance of spiritual life, above the mere outward forms of religion; of the superiority of the life and substance of Christianity, above all ordinances and observances. You are to persuade men that there are things unseen, which are more permanent and glorious than the pleasant things of this present life; that there is an unseen world, unutterably brighter and better than this to which men are bound by a thousand ties of association, and the stronger chains of corrupting passion. You are to unfold the character of God as it appears in the frame-work of the world, and the frame-work of the soul; and as it is more clearly drawn in the words of revelation. You are to speak of the sublime mystery of the incarnation; of the atonement, in its ample and rich provisions; of the character, and suffering, and death of Jesus; and of the glorious life and immortality revealed to us by his resurrection from the dead. These are the great themes of the Gospel, through the faithful preaching of which, shall be displayed the efficacy of the cross, in the salvation of them that believe. Your office is one of difficulty and responsibility, as well as of dignity and glory. But you have for your encouragement the fact that the work on which you enter is God's work; that your office is one which God has established; and in the exercise of it, you become a co-worker with Him in advancing the dearest interests of His kingdom. You know that God will succor you by His grace, if you trust Him; and by the powerful aids of His good Spirit, uphold and strengthen you in the darkest discouragements and the most fiery trials.

Remember too, my brother, that as the office of the ministry is of God's appointing, so the rewards of it will be such as God alone can give. If you are a faithful minister of the Lord Jesus, your reward will not be of this world; you can receive no adequate compensation through the hands of men. But when you have made an end of your ministry, you will

go away to the courts of the King of glory, whence you received your commission, and receive a full return for your labors from Him whose ambassador you are. Your reward will be a courtly welcome from the King himself; a paternal benediction from the source of all blessing; and the privilege of unending fellowship with Christ,—with whom you will share a common joy over all the ransomed of the Lord, who shall be admitted to the peaceful mansions of the blest. You may hear Him say to you to-day, "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*"